



co-op news

May 2006

newsletter of the Dublin Food Co-op

Welcome to the May/June issue of the newsletter. Since the last newsletter, the Annual General Meeting has taken place and in this issue we have a report on this meeting. The meeting elected a new Co-ordinating Body (CB). Three members of the previous CB put themselves forward successfully for re-election and there are nine new members. I am delighted and honoured to announce that at the last Board meeting, I was elected as the new Chairperson.

During my time as Chair I will continue to support the development and growth of the Co-op as best I can. I love the Co-op because there is wonderful organic fresh produce, our shelves carry a great array of healthy dry produce and it provides our children with shelves which are without Barbie baked beans or Bob the Builder spaghetti! We also have a great community of people who come to sell their wares and to shop, many are visionaries, idealists, spiritual seekers and others just like the place! Many come because they are concerned about health, the environment, justice, or because they like the sense of community that exists in the Co-op.

I firmly believe we need to expand and develop the Co-op to engage with a wider market place and move in from the edges. As it is we find it very hard to keep new members and we could do so much more to influence healthy eating patterns, especially among children if we had our own premises.

In my time as Chairperson I want to continue to forge links between members and the Board and ensure there are mechanisms in place to have members views heard. I see the newsletter as an important part of the communication process

It is a tribute to the Co-op, that the new CB is a talented and skilled group who bring a new energy and commitment which I am sure will lead to another productive year for the Co-op. With our new Administrator, I am sure we can continue to improve our systems and develop and adapt our Business Plan as needed. Its been an excellent working document but we need to involve more members and to increase the sense of ownership of the Plan.

Within the new CB we are beginning to clarify roles and to ascertain what needs to be done in the coming year. New premises are also high on our agenda and unfortunately we have no update for this issue of the newsletter; we will keep you informed of any developments there.

In this edition we have a letter for the Members Forum which we launched a few months ago. In this issue Bernie Walsh pulls no punches in her letter about her perception of our high prices and poor labelling amongst some stall-holders. The letter will certainly provoke debate among the new CB and I am sure amongst members in general. So please do write or e-mail us with your views.

I am looking to expand the editorial team, now that I am taking on the role of chairperson. So please do get in touch if you'd like to become involved in some aspect of the Co-op News. My vision for the newsletter has been to provide a forum in which the diversity of the Co-op community can be represented and if you'd

like to help with this please do get in touch.

Many thanks,

Monica Haughey Chairperson / Editor
editor@dublinfoodcoop.com



SGM/ AGM 2006 Report

The Dublin Food Co-op AGM got off to a flying start on April 5th last with a Special General Meeting to consider an important amendment to the rules. The amendment referred to that part of the rules which requires that every director has to resign at every AGM. This had the serious disadvantage that any given incoming board might be composed of all new members with no knowledge of prior decisions taken, thereby preventing any continuity in policy development.

Fortunately, for the Co-op, the proposed amendment was passed. It will provide for a two-year term of office for Board members with one half, only, of the directors resigning at each AGM and with a maximum continuous membership of any one Board member of four years (unless otherwise sanctioned by an AGM) together with some interim arrangements for the first year. Thanks go to our outgoing Chair, Anthony Harris and the previous Co-ordinating Body for arranging this amendment and proposing it at this SGM.

There were two further motions accepted at the AGM. It was agreed that the incoming CB would be directed to examine ways of increasing the participation of the members in the decision making process of the DFC. Secondly the AGM affirmed the desire of members to find a new home and to develop the DFC.

Martin Nolan's auditors report for the financial year 2005 was interesting and affirmative of our financial situation. Martin was reappointed as an auditor by the meeting for the next financial year.

In his report the outgoing Chairperson, Anthony Harris, commended the performance of the resigning CB and referred to the Survey of members' opinion, the revival of the "Co-op News"

and the drawing up of a Business Plan. There was much work involved in the Blackpitts project and in relation to their contribution to this and previous potential locations for the Co-op, Catherine Fitzgerald and Roeland van Elsen were conferred lifelong honorary membership of the DFC. After the Blackpitts move fell through the search for new premises continued and this search is ongoing.

Monica Haughey introduced Sandy Dunlop; Guest Speaker to the gathering. Sandy is a Process Consultant and explained how he works with groups around change and he spoke about the need for the Co-op to move forward and develop whilst ensuring we retain our ethos and values. He introduced the concept of "Branding" as an approach for the Co-op to utilize; he suggested we need to capture and develop what we "stand for" and to convey this to a wider market-place.

The Outgoing Chair person was thanked for his enormous contribution over the past three years. A new Co-ordinating Body was then elected (see below for details) and the meeting proceeded to enjoy a fabulous 23rd Birthday cake made and generously provided by George Heise (stall-Holder). Many thanks to George for his generous contribution of scones and cake for the meeting. Thanks also to Dara Golden and CB members Miriam Hennessey, Suzanne Harkins and Natasha Kalvas for their help with the teas on the night.

Report by Reini Bock and Monica Haughey.

Dublin Food Co-op Co-ordinating Body 2006

Monica Haughey (**Chairperson**), Iris Lyle (**Secretary**), Oonagh Duggan, Steven Coyne, Pauric Cannon, Miriam Hennessey, Aodhagan O'Broin, Siraj Zaidi, Nikki Corbett, Petre Nicolescue, Berti Thomsson, and John Geary.

(Vice- Chairperson and Treasurer not yet appointed)

News from Reini – our new Administrator

Reini has been working away in the mornings organising the workings of the Dublin Food Co-op office and I asked her to tell us how she is getting on.(Editor)

I have been in the office for seven weeks now and I would like to introduce myself. I am an industrial and organisational psychologist with work experience as a training and recruitment co-ordinator and did project management as well. I am 38 years old, married and have two children, aged two and five.

I have lived in Dublin for two years and have settled in well. The fact that I am German and spoilt regarding organic food and - most important – bread (we have a little mill at home and bake our own sour dough bread) brought me to the DFC and suggested a membership.

I now work for the DFC 20 hours a week, mainly in the mornings from 9.15 am – 12.45 pm. Of course I attend CB and other meetings at evening times as well.

I started in a very busy period of the year with the AGM coming up so my first duty was helping to organise it. This included sending out the invitations, preparing copies for the night and many other bits and pieces. In fact Una Coghlan (Checkout Supervisor) did a lot of this and I assisted her because there are many details which require attention and especially in my first

weeks I wouldn't have been able to manage this without her support. Thanks a million Una for that!

The election of the new CB 2006/ 2007 has led to several tasks. I had to update the contact details and created in cooperation with Suzanne Harkins a 'Transition Pack', which contains all the relevant information a new CB member might need. The aim was to support the continuity of the CB and to make sure that achievements previous CB's had made are conserved.

Alongside this there is much work to do to tidy the office and to build up a useful archive. It is essential for me to know where to find crucial documents for delivering high quality service as an office administrator. Due to my background as an HR person I was happy to take over the payroll. I wrote employment contracts, Job descriptions and working hours record sheets. There is still much room for improvement so I would like to keep an eye on this in future. Last but not least I am working on an inventory in order to upgrade our insurance cover.

The Office Admin is a new role so I am still in the process of settling in into this role, especially because it is not clearly defined yet. This makes it very exciting and lively and I really enjoy it I am looking forward to working with the new CB.

My colleagues work flexible hours as well so I am talking a lot on the phone to get the information I need and try to improvise if I can't get anybody! Additionally the fact that I am not a native English speaker requires more support and time, especially if I am writing the minutes of a CB meeting which I suppose would be challenge for anyone. But it helps that am a well structured and organised person and that I enjoy the fact that I am learning every day.

If you want to get in touch with me don't hesitate to call the DFC office (8730451) in the above mentioned hours.

Reini Boch

Dublin Food Co-op Events

Saturday 20th May

Failte for New Members. Failte is an introduction to Dublin Food Co-op for New Members. The Failte will be presented by Development Coordinator, Pauric Cannon and Co-op founder member, Eoin Dinan.

Saturday 27th May

Peak Oil and Community. Speaker: Davie Philip, Events and Communications Director at the Cultivate Centre for Sustainable Living and Learning Centre, Temple Bar, Dublin 2.

Saturday 3rd June

Homeopathy. Siobhan Burke, an established Homeopathy practitioner will speak on Homeopathy. Qualified in 2001, Ms Burke runs a professional Homeopathy practice in Monkstown, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01 230 1292.

Nettle Soup Day ! Made with fresh young nettles and organic potatoes to an original French recipe by Brigitte et Emilo Artega. Brigitte and Emilo are from France and Uruguay respectively and they are specialists in making delicious organic nettle soup. Copies of their secret nettle soup recipe will also be available and a map of where you can find the finest young nettles in Ireland!

Saturday 17th June

Rotters Guide to Composting. Moira O'Brien, Author of *The Rotters Guide to Composting* will present a free workshop on household waste composting. Ms O'Brien is an Environmental Awareness Officer with Wicklow Co. Council.

Saturday 24th June

Bolivia's Emerging Indigenous democracy movement. Claire O'Neill, Latin American aid worker speaks about her recent work in Bolivia on behalf of Trocaire

Saturday 1st July

Nutrition and your Health. Nutritional therapist Gemma O'Connell (Dip IINH N th MBANT) will give a workshop on above. All welcome.
Please note all talks are held upstairs in at 12 noon in Room 2 in St Andrews unless otherwise notified. Admission is free.
Pauric Cannon, Development Officer for Dublin Food Co-op.

Mexican Human Rights activists welcomed at Dublin Food Co-op



Patricia Cervantes and Filipe Arreaga, Mexican Human Rights activists, together with Sean Love, Director of Amnesty and several co-op members.

Amnesty supporters were welcomed to Dublin Food Co-op by the Co-op's new Chairperson, Monica Haughey, on Saturday 6th May at a special conference organised by Amnesty International. The conference highlighted the widespread violation of human rights which have taken place and continue to take place, especially against women, under the government rule of President Vincente Fox.

Patricia Cervantes from Chihuahua in northern Mexico whose 19 year old daughter Neyra, was 'disappeared' in 2003, told the conference about her long, painful and unsuccessful search for justice. Along Mexico's border with the US, human life has little value and women's lives even less. During the past 10 years more than 300 women and girls have been abducted and murdered, many having been sexually assaulted and tortured before their deaths. The majority of these murders remain "unsolved". The Mexican government of President Vincente Fox, has done little to bring justice for these murdered women and their families.

Felipe Arreaga is an environmental activist with Organizacion Campesina Ecologista de la Sierra de Petatlan. He has spent 10 months in jail on a false murder charge because of peaceful non-violent opposition to illegal logging in his native Guerrero in southern Mexico. Here indigenous peoples' livelihoods are threatened by illegal logging, drug trafficking, environmental destruction and Mexican police and army impunity. Senor Arreaga believes that Amnesty's work can help the Mexican government to recognise the international need for justice, especially in the cases of the hundreds of 'disappeared', murdered women.

Keeping Ireland GM Free!

This week, Meath County Council unanimously passed two motions that are widely expected to force the world's largest chemicals company, BASF, to abandon a controversial experiment with patented genetically modified (GMO) potatoes which it hoped to launch in Summerhill, Co. Meath.

The experiment had been given the go ahead by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) but at an emergency community meeting the EPA decision was criticized for ignoring health and environmental risks.

Local farmers in Co. Meath said the release of patented GMO crops could expose them to cross-contamination, mandatory GM labelling, loss of market share, demands for patent royalties, patent infringement lawsuits, and possible loss of ownership of their crops if they became infected with the patented GMO genes.

An Irish Times opinion poll taken in early May found that 72 percent of respondents oppose GM crop trials in Ireland.

The Council's first motion declares Meath a GMO-free zone. This makes Meath the sixth county on the island to prohibit GMO seeds and crops, along with Cavan, Clare, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Roscommon, and the towns of Galway, Navan, Newry and Clonakilty. Meath benefits from some of the most fertile soils in Ireland and is home to the country's largest potato growers. Its official GMO-free status has symbolic importance because Co. Meath (from the Gaelic word 'Midhe' which means 'centre') was the ancient royal county of Ireland during the Neolithic and Celtic periods and the seat of the country's High Kings at the Hill of Tara.

The Council's second motion calls on the EPA not to allow the experimental growing of any GMO seeds or crops in Ireland. Both motions were tabled by Green Party Councillor Tom Kelly. Councillors said that the EPA's decision would produce experimental transgenic potatoes that could not be placed on the market either as animal feed or food, and that the EPA and BASF failed to apply for the planning permission that is consequently required by law for re-zoning the farmland from agricultural to development use. They also said the legal requirement imposed by the EPA for BASF to protect the site with a high-security electrical fence does not conform with normal agricultural practice under Section 5 of the Planning Act. Frank Corcoran, Chairman of An Taisce the National Trust for Ireland, said the Meath Co. Council decisions will trigger a lengthy legal procedure that will effectively prevent the release of GMO crops in Meath for the foreseeable future.

Michael O'Callaghan, co-ordinator of the GM-free Ireland Network welcomed the decision by Meath County Council as a victory for common sense and local democracy, adding that he was thrilled the Local Authority had taken responsibility to protect the County from an irreversible invasion of GM crops for which there is no market in Europe.

Meanwhile, at a press conference held by GM-free Ireland Network, Kathy Synnott MEP said "if the European Commission persists in its misguided policy of forcing GM seeds and crops on us, the people of Ireland will vote against adopting the European Constitution or any further integration". Mary Upton, Labour TD has said she fully supports the campaign to keep Ireland free of GMO seeds and crops.

Jackie Bourke (Co-op member).

News from Vendemia Organic Wines

For quite some time now a number of people have enquired about non-alcoholic wines. Initially I thought that this was a strange request as I had not heard of non-alcoholic wine. Yet, I had drunk non-alcoholic beer before and thus figured that if there is non-alcoholic beer there should be non-alcoholic wine. I then started to look around and Helen found a producer of non-alcoholic wine at Biofach in Germany.

The wine is produced organically in the Languedoc, France and then shipped to Germany where they developed a procedure of de-alcoholization called vacuum rectification. In this process the boiling point of alcohol is reduced by decreasing the atmospheric pressure to approximately 15 mbar; so that alcohol can be evaporated and separated at a temperature of 28-30 C. As a consequence, the aromatic substances in wine are largely preserved as well as the polyphenols. Since alcohol, the basic carrier of taste, has been removed, the de-alcoholized wine needs to have some must or sugar added as a substitute. Hence, I would rate the wine as medium dry. The finished product contains 0.1 - 0.25 volume percent alcohol which is less than red fruit jelly with 1.0 g or even cookies with 0.7 g.

Curious - then why not try some? They are good value and well worth a go!

Urs,
VENDEMIA WINES (www.vendemiawines.com)

Food Co-op Walks For May and

June

May

WHERE: Lugnaquilla from Glenmalure. Lugnaquilla is the highest mountain in the Wicklow mountains and is a reasonably tough climb. Glenmalure is the longest valley in Ireland and has spectacular scenery as well as varied fauna and flora. The walk will take approximately six hours.

WHEN: The last Sunday of May, the 28th.

MEET: In Laragh village outside Lynams Pub at 11am.

June

WHERE: Saint Kevin's Way from Hollywood village to the Wicklow Gap. This is an ancient pilgrim route which was used by people travelling from West Wicklow and further afield to Glendalough. It is a valley walk which follows loosely the course of the King river upstream. It has been revived in recent years by people trying to restore a rich heritage of spirituality. It will take approximately five hours.

WHEN: Sunday 25th June.

MEET: Hollywood village at 11am.

For all walks bring comfortable footwear, warm waterproof gear and some food.

For more details or if you need a lift contact Larry Gordon at 087-6832827(Mobile) or 2882957(Home).

Members Forum

Are Co-op prices too high?

Dear Editor.

Why is it that prices at this 'non-profit' making organic food co-operative are more expensive than the most expensive local health food shop? If it is because the Co-op is trying to raise funds in order to provide better facilities/service for members then may I respectfully suggest that this practice is in fact counter-productive

and has the dual effect of upsetting existing members who support the Co-op by taking the trouble of travelling in every week to do their weekly shopping, instead of shopping locally. It also builds up resistance and bad will with visitors and potential new members who view it as a bit of a "rip-off".

A second issue I would like to raise is the somewhat tardy and non-user friendly nature of pricing of items in the fruit and veg section. It is bizarre and difficult to believe that people are effectively expected to "shop-blind" which is what it amounts to when prices are not clear and instantly visible. This results in much ongoing frustration for existing members and has a negative impact on new potential members.

May I suggest if members are asked to raise funds for better facilities that it is done through dedicated 'fund-raising' channels. Members could be invited to assist in this. I would like to offer the concept of a Spring Ball fund raiser, where tickets could be set at E45/50 each.

If the practise of raising funds by increasing the price of produce is to continue then notices should be put up explaining this to members and potential alike, because not doing so is an exercise in 'negative PR'. This serves only to damage the Co-op at a time when organised cooperative movements are enjoying unprecedented consumer support. 'It begs the question' what is the E20 membership of the Co-op for and ultimately what is the Co-op offering people exactly?

Regards,
Bernie Walsh

Vegetable Biryani

Ingredients:

Basmati rice, salt, olive oil, bay leaves, small cardamom, cinnamon stick, fennel seed, rice colourings (or saffron). Selection of mixed vegetables.

Step 1: take two / three cups of rice ...wash it well. And then leave for soaking in cold water for about 15 minutes.

Step 2: Fill the ½ saucepan with the water ...put in bay leaves, 3 or 4 small cardamoms, cinnamon stick, fennel seed....bring it to boil ...then add your mix veg and salt....bring to boil again...and then add soaked rice....bring it to boil again...and then cover with a tight lidmake sure you are not letting the steam out....make a small chink in between the lid and the pan and drain the water....completely....to the last drop.

Step 3: Leave it to steamadd dash of olive oil, and rice colour and let it steam for about 10 mins...turn the heat off ...and leave it for about ten more mins.

Recipe provided by Siraj Zaidi of North Indian Gourmet Delight. Siraj sells his delicious Indian food at the Co-op Saturday market and also does private catering and cookery demonstration on request. (Tel : 4928156) We will have more from Siraj in further editions of the Co-op News.

Co-op News:

Any articles for inclusion in next newsheet should be forwarded to editor@dublinfoodcoop.com or by post to Co-op News, Dublin Food Co-op, 12A North King Street, Dublin 7, Ireland. Any members interested in helping with the newsletter please also get in touch.

Editor: Monica Haughey (Co-ordinating Body). Layout and Design: Anthony Dillon. Thanks to Jackie Bourke.